

Legionellosis & Hot Tubs

What? How? Where?

What? Legionellosis is an illness caused by the bacteria *Legionella pneumophila*, which is found in warm, damp environments. Legionellosis takes two forms: Legionnaires' disease, a serious and sometimes fatal form of pneumonia, and Pontiac Fever, a milder flu-like illness.

How? Legionellosis can be contracted by breathing in mist or vapor that has been contaminated with *Legionella*. It cannot be spread from one person to another.

Where? *Legionella* can be found in recreational waters such as spas, whirlpools, and hot tubs. Other sources can include: humidifiers, cooling towers, hot water systems, and respiratory therapy systems.

Prevention

To help protect yourself from Legionellosis:

- Make sure hot tubs are properly maintained and disinfected. Because *Legionella* is spread through vaporized water, even just being in the vicinity of a hot tub has resulted in cases and deaths due to Legionellosis.
- Use pool testing strips to check for the appropriate chlorine or bromine levels (2-6 parts per million) and appropriate

pH (7.2-7.8) levels. You can receive free pool testing strips from: <http://www.healthypools.org/freeteststrips/>.


Risk Factors for contracting Legionellosis are higher for these groups:


- Individuals 50 years of age or older
- Smokers (current or former)
- People with chronic lung disease (such as emphysema and chronic asthma)
- Individuals with weakened immune systems.

Symptoms


Symptoms of Legionnaires' disease can appear 2-14 days after infection and last for weeks. Symptoms can include headache, high fever, cough, muscle aches, chills, chest pain and gastrointestinal symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, and/or abdominal pains. Should you experience these symptoms, seek diagnosis and treatment from your healthcare provider.

Symptoms of Pontiac Fever can appear a few hours after infection. Symptoms can include mild fever, headaches and muscle pain, diarrhea, and dry cough. They can last up to 5 days. Symptoms will usually go away on their own, but treatment of symptoms may ease discomfort.





Information from this fact sheet, as well as additional information is available from:
CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/rwi/illnesses/legionella.html> &
<http://www.cdc.gov/legionella/>
OSHA: http://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm_iii/otm_iii_7.html
WHO: http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/emerging/legionella.pdf



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